

Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics

Quarter 1 – Module 2: Concepts, Aspects, and Changes of Culture and Society



ON FOCUS

In this part of your journey, we provide something for you to deepen your understanding about culture.

Please continue reading with comprehension as you discover further knowledge that will help you out in your quest on the remaining phases of this lesson.

HAPPY READING!

CULTURE and SOCIETY as a COMPLEX WHOLE

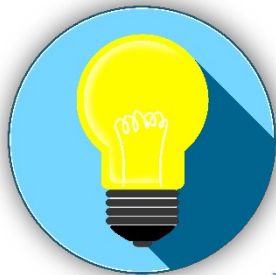
Edward Tylor, one of the founders of modern anthropology, characterize culture as a “complex whole” which encompasses beliefs, practices, traits, values, attitudes, laws, norms, artifacts, symbols, knowledge and everything that a person learns and shares as a member of the society.¹

The “complex whole” above suggests that culture cannot be simply broken down into a set of characteristics. It means that an understanding of a part can only be achieved in relation to other parts of the system. This requires an approach where all at once, one can get an appreciation of what culture is all about without being bothered by its complexity or by any definition that attempts to capture such complexity.

A society cannot exist apart from culture. A society may refer to group of people that follows or shares same cultures. People, as members of the society, possess, produce and also transmit culture but they cannot consider themselves as culture. No culture can exist without social interaction in society; meanwhile, society cannot exist in the absence of people who have learned to live and work together.

¹ G.M. Lanuaza and S.S.Raymundo, *Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics* Manila: Rex Boolstore, 2016, 7-12.

IN FOCUS



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CHARACTERISTICS of CULTURE

1. *Culture is social because it is the product of behavior.*
 - Culture does not exist in isolation. It is a product of society. It develops through social interaction. No man can acquire culture without association with others.



2. *Culture varies from society to society.*
 - Every society has a culture of its own that differs from other societies. The culture of every society is unique by itself. Cultures are not uniform. Cultural elements like customs, traditions, morals, values, and beliefs are not constant.



3. *Culture is shared.*
 - Culture is not something that an individual alone can possess. Culture, in sociological sense, is shared. For example, people of a society share all customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morals, etc.



4. *Culture is learned.*
 - Culture is not inborn. It is learned. Unlearned behavior then, is not culture. Shaking hands, saying thanks, etc. are cultural behaviors. Not all behaviors are learned, but most of these can be. Combing hair, standing in line, telling

jokes, criticizing the president, and going to movies all constitute behaviors that need to be learned.



5. *Culture is transmitted among members of society.*

- Cultural ways are learned by people from others. Many of these ways are handed down from elders, parents, teachers, and others (most likely individuals of older generation), while other cultural behaviors are handed up to elders. Transmission of culture is made possible by **language**. Language is the main vehicle of culture. Transmission of culture may take place also through **imitation** as well as through **instruction**.



6. *Culture is continuous and cumulative.*

- Culture exists as a continuous process. In its historical growth, it tends to become cumulative. Ralph Linton called culture “the social heritage” of man. No culture ever remains constant or permanent. It is subject to slow but constant variation. Likewise, culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the physical world; hence, it is dynamic.

7. *Culture is gratifying and idealistic.*

- Culture provides proper opportunities for the satisfaction of our needs and desires. Our needs, both biological and social, are fulfilled in cultural ways. Culture consists of the intellectual, artistic, and social ideals, and institutions where members of the society profess and strive to confirm.



² G.M. Lanuaza and S.S.Raymundo, *Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics Manila: Rex Bookstore, 2016, 7-12.*